

Book Summary/Review: The Power Of Wisdom

This article is based on the following book:

The Power Of Wisdom

by Aman Motwane

Aman Motwane hints that when you have the power of wisdom you possess the magic of seeing what others can't. He claims that successful people don't know different things...they just see things differently. I believe the Power of Wisdom is a book well worth reading. It's 150 pages long and can be absorbed in a couple hours time. However, as you will see by this summary, you will have spend considerably more time going back and reviewing your mark ups of the text.

Motwane breaks down the power of wisdom into seven compartments. They are:

- " The wisdom of duality
- " The wisdom of resonance
- " The wisdom of ecology
- " The wisdom of aggregation
- " The wisdom of magnanimity
- " The wisdom of stratification
- " The wisdom of enlightenment

Rather than go into a summary of each chapter, I will share with you 10 or so points I found most enlightening and my comments about them.

The basic theme of the book is not unlike that of other personal growth material I have read over the last few years. In fact, it is greatly in alignment with my own philosophies. To sum it up, it is this: Our joy and self-worth in life is directly related to how we view our circumstances and ourselves. We can either chose to be victims and blame others for our circumstances. Or villains and seek to justify why we find ourselves hurting others. Or, we could remove ourselves from the circumstance completely and come from a place of complete personal responsibility. That responsibility includes thinking for ourselves, knowing our personal feelings, and being attuned to the thinking and feelings of others. Motwane points out that becoming responsible is not about taking in more information. The fact is, we already know enough. It is not about education and experience. It is more about seeing and knowing.

This philosophy has had a profound impact on the way I view the workplace. It effects how I give advice when it comes to legal compliance and employee productivity. It applies to the way in which I help manage conflict and mediate claims. Interestingly, Motwane uses a dozen or more examples from the workplace applying his philosophy, which alone would make for a great report. (Perhaps I can get him to summarize his workplace insights for us).

"Information gets quickly outdated; but wisdom is timeless

I couldn't agree more. That is why when putting together the LAWSUIT FREE! Program I chose not to focus on the legal trend of the moment, but rather those that have had the greatest impact over the longest period of time. I want clients and customers to master the essentials and not worry about the rest.

The wisdom of duality is something that I have been working on in recent months. It is true acceptance of the fact that you are not, and cannot be in control. Tension and insecurity are insurmountable. The quest for security is a pipe dream. Motwane said that life is like flipping a coin. There are two sides to every equation. A black and white, yin and yang, good and evil. Rather than accepting this duality, many of us make it a life long goal to eliminate it - at great expense to ourselves and those around us. We construct tight-knit policies in the workplace to control employee behavior and instead generate resentment and mental gravity.

When we understand duality we understand there will always be pains in our life and that life is not designed to be "fair", but that it is designed to supply us with a never ending string of lessons to learn.

"With the wisdom of duality...you know to never assign any MEANING to success and failure, to winning or losing. Success is random. It's like flipping the coin. However, the more frequently you toss that coin, the more likely you are to experience success."

That is one reason why you must allow employees to make mistakes. Motwane tells us that we must view our outcomes and ourselves without judgement. That is sooo hard to do. The fact is, it's not about success, it's about acceptance. Long-term success is always preceded by acceptance.

"As the other person feels understood and accepted, he almost automatically gets into an opened frame of mind, ready to make any reasonable changes."

This is the first step Motwane gives us for change. It's about feeling safe. It's about knowing that change will happen, but not at personal expense. The second thing that he tells us about change is to make it big and do it quickly. He tells us that we must burn the bridges so that there is not going back. He explains that even in periods of great change the coexistence between old and new remains. If we want to effectuate big change we literally have to destroy the old and eliminate that coexistence.

The wisdom of duality is about wisdom and empowerment. Motwane explains how the swing from leadership in the 80's to empowerment in the 90's has left many companies confused. He points out that companies have to embrace the duality of leadership and empowerment. One won't work without the other. (Much in the same way, there is a lot written about finding good employees. But the fact is, what comes to you comes from you. More should be written about being a good employer. Why should somebody want to work with you? What's in it for them?)

"With the wisdom of duality, you know that prejudices and biases are inherent in nature...The need to draw lines and distinguishes inherent in human nature. Social intervention or government regulations may eradicate on set of lines. But it will soon be replaced by another set of new lines"

How true, how true. How has it that we find ourselves trapped in such litigious culture? Does an elaborate claims resolution process reduce the casual factors behind the filing of claims? The answer based on universal experience has to be "no". (For example, as soon as we created the ADA we created a line between persons who are "disabled" and those who are "non-disabled". The culture line that exists in amorphous form now on has become a bright line. We then find ourselves trying to define the bright lines in confusing terms at best. For example, it takes the EEOC 56 pages to define the term "mental disability". And look at the results. The latest statistics I have seen show 80% of all mental disability claimants have their cases dismissed. What a dupe. Rather than getting people to rely on their own wisdom, we have duped them into becoming victims.

We are getting better and better at particularly describing their unique brand of victim-hood. Unfortunately, we are getting more of what we are focusing on. More lines, more divisions and more confusion.)

Motwane makes another good point that I share with my groups. It is that consensus decision making can be dangerous. Not only is it slow, but it tends to gravity to the lowest common denominator. But, with the wisdom of duality, you know that consensus decision making must coexist with individual decision making. Our employees must be able to think for themselves and you leaders must step up to the task.

I like the metaphor that Motwane uses for dealing with the concept of vision. He said it is like a balloon that you are holding onto by way of a string. There is a natural tension. If you let up the slightest, your vision could float away. It also implies that your vision is something that will always be out of grasp. It's not about looking forward to the day your life is perfect. Rather it is about accepting your life as it is today while continuing to live for your dreams.

"We all want freedom...but what we really NEED is self-discipline." "You fully expect that every problem you solve will inevitably lead to a new problem."

This sounds like Bruckminister Fuller to me. Bucky used to say that the reward for solving one set of problems is an even greater set of problems. Either way you say it, obtaining your vision is not about finding a safe place. It is about getting more out of life.

Motwane explains that too many people and companies get caught up in living up to the latest expectation. Instead they ought to be setting the expectations. (For example, first the expectation was a decent wage, then it was health benefits, then it was full benefits, then it became a retirement plan and what's now is stock options. The question is "what next?" Are you busy living up to existing expectations or are you setting the mark? Any company still stuck in the age old mindset of paying employees as little as they can, finds in return that employees will work as little as they can... to ensure they don't get fired.

Today's enlightened companies are paying as much as they possibly can and in exchange are receiving today's new loyalties. It's not about what do we have to do. It's about what we can do.

What Motwane says in this book and I have been learning over the past year is that all of us feel unsafe some place. I grew up in the South Bronx and it isn't hard to consider yourself a tough character after that experience. To me, fear didn't exist in workplace environments; it was out on the streets. I figured I wasn't afraid of anything. But I was ready Dr. Spencer Johnson's book, "Who Moved My Cheese." (Another book summary that I did.) Which contained a question, "What would you do if I weren't afraid?" And the question began to eat at me. I began to ask myself, what if I was afraid of something? What would that be? Surprisingly, I have been getting hit with those answers left and right in recent months. I realized that I, like many others, am afraid of giving up control. Sometimes I fear change in my heart. I am realizing that you can't just read about what other people have to say, you have to do a lot of independent thinking and ask yourself, "What does all of this mean?" Simply asking yourself these questions, answers will flow to you naturally.

"You are not interested in the details. You are interested in how the detail are connected."

Today's focus must be on connections, relationships, networks, etc. and we must go beyond the surface. We must help others to tap into their own wisdom. We must produce an environment that will help them to "think outside the box".

Motwane chronicles a number of breakthroughs including everything from America's Funniest Home Videos to Southwest Airlines and Starbucks, and attributes these breakthroughs to his wisdoms. And he is correct. While I don't know if there is anything magical about this wisdom, I do know that it is indeed rare.

Motwane readily encourages us to focus on not so much on the "why, why, why," but on "what are we going to do about it." Again, I couldn't agree more. Again, my LAWSUIT FREE! program was built less on an understanding of what the law is and more on what strategies and tools you need to address it.

You ALWAYS look for ways to leverage your efforts through OTHER PEOPLE'S RESOURCES so that, with this combined muscle you can become the 10-ton gorilla who sits anywhere he pleases."

I could not agree more. That's why I am working with associations, employers groups, insurance companies and others to leverage the distribution of my materials. Which association, competitor, non-competitor, vendor or customer can you leverage? What could you offer their clients and customers that would benefit all parties involved?

We think we are hiding our innermost fears from others. But the only thing we are successful in hiding is the truth from ourselves."

Amen to that. I am continually learning that it is less about what I want other people to do and more about who it is that I am. It is the fear of exposing yourself, even to yourself, that can be paralyzing.

Motwane reminds us that finding career success doesn't mean searching for the right employer. It means becoming a great employee. We have to be what we want. To have love we must be love. To have great relationships, we have to become great at relating. As a friend Marshall Thurber states, "It's all about becoming."

A message that I have been getting pounded with lately is that real heroes don't try to change other people, they empower them to change themselves. This is a difficult concept to follow, especially, "when you care so much." According to Motwane and my friend Loy Young, a real hero helps people to rise above their insecurities to reach their unrealized potential. This can never be done by controlling the other person. It can only be done through leadership and example.

Motwane explains that success is not about getting connected to a lot of people, it's about connecting with people in your life. For example, it's less about getting connected with new employees than it is about being connected with the ones you already have.

"As you have seen, wisdom is not about doing things differently. It is about seeing things differently. And by seeing things differently, you end up doing things differently...which ultimately leads to sense of abiding joy in life."

This pretty much summarizes the greatest insight that can be derived from this book. It is one that we have heard in different forms and quite frankly can't hear enough. Personal and corporate growth is a delicate balance between taking in new information, thinking for yourself, and then doing something.